

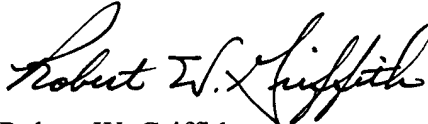
REMARKS

The present application was filed on December 29, 2000 with claims 1-29. Claims 1-3, 5-11, 13-18 and 20-31 are pending. In the outstanding Office Action, the Examiner required restriction of claims 1-3, 5-11, 13-18 and 20-31 of the above-referenced application to one of the following groups of claims: (i) claims 1-3, 5-7, 16-18 and 20-22 (Group I); and (ii) claims 8-11, 13-15 and 23-31 (Group II).

The Examiner contends that the inventions set forth in Groups I and II are distinct in that they are shown to be separately usable, and more specifically, that the invention of Group II has separate utility such as protecting a document from unauthorized access.

Applicants assert that claims 30 and 31 are more properly categorized in Group I due to their dependency from independent claim 1. Therefore, Applicants hereby provisionally elect the claims of Group I, namely, claims 1-3, 5-7, 16-18, 30 and 31, for prosecution on the merits.

Respectfully submitted,



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